

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, YO

SUBJECT: ROBERTS BOOK

REF: BELGRADE 2956

1. SUGGEST PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER RAISE SUBJECT ROBERTS BOOK WITH INFORMATION SECRETARY BUDIMOVSKI, REITERATING PRIVATE NATURE OF BOOK. LITTELL SHOULD SAY HE HAS RECEIVED REPLY FROM ROBERTS IN RESPONSE TO BUDIMOVSKI' S COMMENTS. ROBERTS GREATLY SURPRISED BY BUDIMOVSKI' S COMPLAINTS TO DIRECTOR KEOGH CHARACTERIZING HIS BOOK AS UNFRIENDLY. THOSE WHO HAVE READ BOOK INCLUDING GEORGE KENNAN AND JOHN CAMPBELL DESCRIBE IT AS OBJECTIVE ACCOUNT OF EVENTS. REVIEW IN PRESTIGIOUS JOURNAL (FOREIGN AFFAIRS) DESCRIBES IT AS " THE BEST BOOK WRITTEN ON THE SUBJECT TO DATE."

2. ROBERTS NEVER EQUATED TITO AND MIHAILOVIC. COMPARISONS WHICH DID APPEAR WERE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF TITO, THUS ON PAGE 332: " TITO WAS SUPERB ORGANIZER WHILE MIHAILOVIC LACKED THAT TALENT ALTOGETHER. DISCIPLINE WAS A WEAPON
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OF THE PARTISANS, BUT MIHAILOVIC FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO CONTROL HIS SUBORDINATES AND SOME CHETNIK LEADERS BROUGHT EARLY DISGRACE UPON HIS MOVEMENT."

3. ROBERTS DID NOT EQUATE PARTISANS AND CHETNIKS AS FORCES OPPOSING GERMAN AND AXIS FORCES. THUS ON PAGE 50:
" IT IS NOT SURPRISING, THEREFORE, THAT AT THE END OF 1941 THE PARTISANS, WHO HAD STARTED OUT AS COMPARATIVELY SMALL GROUP OF MEMBERS OF THE CPY HAD BECOME A SIZEABLE AND STILL GROWING MOVEMENT WHICH ENCOMPASSED SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF NON- COMMUNISTS. EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN EJECTED FROM SERBIA BY THE GERMAN FIRST OFFENSIVE AND HAD RETREATED INTO EASTERN BOSNIA THEY HAD BECOME AN ACTIVE RESISTANCE FORCE OF SOME INFLUENCE. AT YEAR' S END, THE CHETNIKS WERE STATIC AND HAD BEEN DISBANDED IN SERBIA (THOUGH NOT IN MONTENEGRO WHERE SOME SORT OF COLLABORATION WITH THE ITALIANS HAD BEGUN)."

4. ROBERTS NEVER STATED THAT MACEDONIANS WELCOMED BULGARIAN OCCUPATION FORCES AS LIBERATORS FROM SERBIAN OPPRESSION. IN ONLY REFERENCE TO MACEDONIA, BOOK GIVES CREDIT TO CPY FOR PROCLAIMING AS EARLY AS 1942 A MACEDONIAN NATIONALITY WITHIN YUGOSLAVIA WHICH " TOOK THE WIND OUT OF THE SAILS OF THOSE WHO HAD ASKED TO JOIN BULGARIA."

5. LITTELL MIGHT ADD THAT BOOK HAS BEEN WIDELY REVIEWED HERE AS DECIDEDLY FAVORABLE TO YUGOSLAVIA AND UNDERCUTTING EMIGRE ATTACKS ON TITO AND HIS REGIME. WE ARE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED HERE THAT RESPONSIBLE YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS APPEAR DISPOSED TO COMMENT NEGATIVELY WITHOUT HAVING SEEN, STILL LESS READ, THE ROBERTS BOOK, AND WOULD HOPE OTHERS WILL WITHHOLD COMMENT UNTIL THEY HAVE SEEN TEXT.

6. TEN COPIES ROBERTS BOOK SHIPPED THROUGH REGULAR ICS CHANNELS. USIA AIR SHIPPING ONE COPY IMMEDIATELY ADDRESSED TO LITTELL. RUSH

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